Answer to NZMJ about Ron Jones’ research

Dr R W Jones was a co-author of the 1984 ‘McIndoe Paper’,¹ which became the principal catalyst of the 1987 Judicial Inquiry into treatment of cervical dysplasia at National Women’s Hospital. The 1984 McIndoe Paper states that of the 948 women with grade 3 cervical dysplasia reviewed, 1955–76, 923 had principal initial treatment of hysterectomy or cone excision of cervix and 25 punch or wedge biopsies.²

Dr R W Jones is also a co-author of a 2010 article in the ANZJOG,³ which claims to be the ‘final word’ to silence all critics of the 1984 McIndoe Paper. This 2010 article states that of the 948 women reviewed by McIndoe in the years 1955–76, 428 women, in the years 1965–74, had initial management in which treatment of ‘curative intent’ was deliberately withheld in unethical experiments. This era was selected to prove that the 1966 NWH ‘more conservative dysplasia management protocols were an added cancer risk’.

Simple arithmetic confirms that it is not possible to have 428 women with treatment of “curative intent withheld” in 948 women when the 1984 McIndoe Paper states 923 had initial treatments of cone excision or hysterectomy, i.e. on their own 2010 definition ‘treatment of curative intent’.

The 1984 McIndoe statistics are correct; the 2010 statistics are damaging fiction in my opinion.

Elizabeth Overton
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References:

This letter was corrected on 26 November 2010 to reflect the Erratum at http://www.nzmj.com/journal/123-1326/4460/content.pdf